

[Inger Watland]

Week No. 26

Item No. 2

Words 1000

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FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Fay Levos ADDRESS Petersburg, Nebr.

DATE Febr. 26, 1940 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Inger Watland, Petersburg, Nebr.
2. Date and time of interview Febr. 24, 2*00—4:00 PM
3. Place of interview Employers home.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant None
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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Sitting room, day bed, base burner, sewing machine, chair, curtains and rug. [C. 15 Neb.?)

Form B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Fay Levos Address Petersburg, Nebr.

DATE Febr. 26, 1940 SUBJECT Fork lore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Inger Watland, Petersburg, Nebr.

1. Ancestry Norwegian
2. Place and date of birth Fayette County, Iowa, March 24, 1877.
3. Family Herself.
4. Place lived in, with dates Iowa 1877-1880 Nebr. 1880-1940
5. Education, with dates Country school.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Housekeeper.
7. Special skills and interests Traveling
8. Community and religious activities Lutheran church.
9. Description of informant Tall, rather heavy set, dark eyes and slightly gray hair.
10. Other points gained in interview None

Inger Watland, Petersburg Nebraska

My parents came from Norway and settled in Chicago, where my father was a carpenter, he helped to rebuild after the great fire of 1772. Later they came to Iowa. I was born there

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in Fayette County. My father came to Nebraska and homesteaded in what is now known as North Branch, Boone County. He came alone. He put up a sod house and some sheds for the stock and when he was ready to send for us every thing burned down. So he had to put up more buildings and when we got to Nebraska in a moving wagon, mother, brother and myself, we had to stay with Mr. & Mrs. Ericson. They lived in a dugout in the side of a bank. When our place was ready we moved into it and lived five years there. Then Father built a frame house as he could not stand the sod. My sister died bearing leaving a boy 21 months old and I took care of him. I took a trip to Norway as I had heard my folks talk so much about it. We went by train to New York City. Then we boarded the steamer Stavanger-Fjord-she and her sister ship still have their regular routes between U. S. and Norway. We had some bad weather going over and one night we had quite a storm. The waves were very high and the ship would rock and all the next day the sea was so rough that nobody could be on deck as the water would wash over the deck and wind blew so hard. But we did not get scared neither did I get sea sick. We landed at Christianson, Norway. There the water was shallow so we had to get in smaller boats to get a shore. I had some relatives here so I visited them a-while. Then I went to visit my uncle near Bergen. Here I went to the church that my father and mother were married in and I also got to see the house that my parents first lived in. It was just the same as then with the exception of one new floor that had been put in so my uncle told me. This part of Norway was very beautiful, green grass all over, on where the paths were, beautiful flowers and water all around as the surface water is so close to the ground. There were mountains around with grass growing all the way up but on top they were bare. I could walk along most any where and get a drink as there was running water down from the mountains. I had some nice boat trips around Norway. One trip I was the only passenger aboard as this boat took school children from Stavanger to another town. I must cant remember now. There were 300 of them and so they were not suppose to take passengers, but in Stavanger at this time was a big celebration and all the hotels and rooming houses were filled up so I was given a room or rather a berth on the boat to stay so they took me along on that trip. It was fun talking to the crew and captain and of course the matron and two

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women cooks were there. It was harvesting time at my uncles about the time when I got back so I helped him. First he cut the grain or oats with a hand scyth and then I was to tie them into budnles. I could not get the hang of tying them so I carried a bunch of grain to him and he would tie them. Then he put a stick in the ground and tie bundles all around the stick and put a bundle on top of the stick so they could dry as it is so damp there. When it was ready to be threshed he and two other men and three of us girls made up the threshing crew. We had a hand thresher, it wasn't any bigger than fanning mill and the men would take turns turning for about 10 or 15 minutes, as that all the longer they could stand to turn it. When the oats piled up underit they stopped and filled the sacks and we girls took the straw and carried to the hay house. I never was so much oats from such a small patch. Then I helped hay too, the hay was cut with a hand scyth and I helped rack it into bundles with a wooden hand rake. After it dried we carried it on our backs; by fastening it on with straps, to the hay sheds, as all the hay and straw hve to be put in sheds. Hay was the main crop there, as they kept their cows in the sheds from November to April. There the people are very considerate of ones property. If they [w?] walk along by their neighbors property they would not take a thing, not even a wild berry. One day a man and his family were traveling by and [wanted?] to eat their dinner, so they came and asked if they might eat their dinner in our pasture as it was nice and shady. There was a little mountain out in the water aways and just like and island, where people would row and eat their dinners. The mountains were so interesting as aways up it would by rocky and rough and then there was a nice flat place where there were fields of hay and grain and people living there. Then more rocks up aways farther up, then more fields. I left Norway in November on the same stemaer that I went over on. Around the shores for about a mile or two at sea I could see fishing boats and when the wave come toward the ship I could see fish in them. We had smooth sailing all the way back. Aways out of New York harbor the ship stopped in the still water at night for some reason, I don't remember, and the next morning the first thing I saw was the Statue of Liberty, at New York. I visited some more of my relatives. My cousin works on the freighter ship around the harbor and during a storm

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he was swept over board and drowned. I rode through the subway and on the elevated cars and had a wonderful tim. I stopped in Chicago and visited a cousin.